

OF THE DELAWARE INDIANS

65

For their worship which is diabolical, it is performed usually but once or twice a year, unless upon some extraordinary occasion, as upon making of war or the like; their usual time is about *Michaelmass*, when their corn is first ripe, the day being appointed by their chief Priest or pawaw, most of them go a hunting for venison: When they are all congregated, their priest tells them if he want money, their God will accept of no other offering, which the people believing, every one gives money according to their ability." 796

This is the sort of description of a pretribal ceremony which one would expect from a seventeenth-century writer. The hunt for venison and the use of wampum were, for example, integral features of the later Big House Ceremony. Speck has suggested that the historic form of the ceremony developed from "rites managed by the ceremonial group (Turkey, Tortoise, Wolf)" which, in turn, developed from family or individual rites.⁴³ In historic times each phratry varied somewhat from the others in the performance of the ceremony; that of the Wolf phratry, for instance, lasted only eight days, whereas the ceremony of the Turkey phratry lasted twelve days.⁴⁴ In a sense, then, the ceremony never attained complete tribal integration. Since Speck's studies of the Big House Ceremony are relatively complete and are complemented by those of Zeisberger, Trowbridge, and Harrington, and by the eyewitness account by Luckenbach, it is not necessary here to give a detailed description of the historic ceremony; a brief synopsis taken from the accounts of these writers and from the descriptions given by my own informants should suffice. 615

After the Big House Ceremony became a tribal affair, it was held but once a year. It took place in a "big house," a building which also served as a council house and was similar in structure to the Iroquoian Long House. In the center of this structure was a pole, on the north and south sides of which were carved faces;⁴⁵ ten other identical faces were placed around the walls. Apparently this was the practice before 1763.⁴⁶ The participants camped near the Big House for the duration of the ceremony, the women to the north and the men to the south (M.B.). Throughout this period celibacy was practiced, participants were supposed to be in a pure and clean frame of mind, and menstruating women were not allowed inside the Big House. Offenders were removed from the building by the Mask Being or other officials.⁴⁷ One individual, known as the "bringer-in," sponsored and led the ceremony, and the phratry to which he belonged determined the exact form the ceremony was to take. One source stated that in each phratry there was a family which inherited the right to sponsor the annual ceremony;⁴⁸ possibly this was a vestige of the individual or family rites from which it evolved. 344 346 784

⁴³Denton, 1845, p. 7.

⁴⁴Speck, 1950, p. 27.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, p. 16; Harrington, 1913, p. 230.

⁴⁶Zeisberger, 1910, p. 141.

⁴⁷Kinietz, 1940, p. 116, dates this fea-

ture after 1824, but Bartram and Kenny apparently saw such a ceremonial structure in August, 1761 (Kenny, 1913, p. 22).

⁴⁸Trowbridge MS; M.B.

⁴⁹Trowbridge MS.

82	LENAPE
615 796^x 202 796^x ● 346 796^x	here related, differing in some particulars from the ceremonies as practised by the Turtle or Turkey people. In former times, it is said, when one phratry had finished its twelve days of ceremonies, another would enact theirs, followed by the third; but at present qualified leaders are so few that it seldom if ever happens that more than one of them feels able to accept such exacting duties in any one year. This leader it is who sends a messenger forth to notify the people what day the ceremonies are to commence and to invite them all to attend. Several days before the date the wagons begin to roll in and a white village of tents springs up about the gray walls of the old Big House, temple, or <i>xi'ngwikan</i> (pl. v), standing on the banks of Little Caney river, north of Dewey in northern Oklahoma, far from any human habitation. Built of rough logs, the Big House is now provided with a roof of hand-split shingles pierced by two great smoke-holes, as shown in the frontispiece and in
	INDIAN NOTES

346

PL. V

HARRINGTON — LENAPE RELIGION AND CEREMONIES



LENAPE CEREMONIAL HOUSE NEAR DEWEY, OKLAHOMA

6: Harrington E-5 (1907-1910) 1921
NM7 Delaware NM7
Lenape

[Facing p. 82]

UNAMI CEREMONY

83

pl. v, vi, but in former days the roof was of bark. The length is about 40 ft. from east to west, with a height at the eaves of about 6 ft., at the ridge 14 ft., and a width of 24.5 ft. Aside from certain ingenuities of construction which can not be discussed here, its chief interest lies in the two large carvings of the human face, one facing east (fig. 6) and one west, which adorn the great central post supporting the ridge-pole. Similar carvings, but smaller, may be seen upon each of the six posts which support the logs forming the sides (fig. 7), and still smaller ones, one upon each of the four door-posts. All twelve faces are painted, the right side of each red, the left black. The building is used only for the Annual Ceremony.



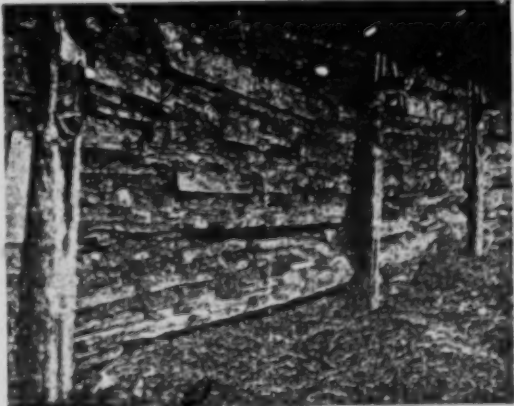
FIG. 6.—
Central post
of Ceremo-
nial House,
showing
carved face.

346 ●
796 X

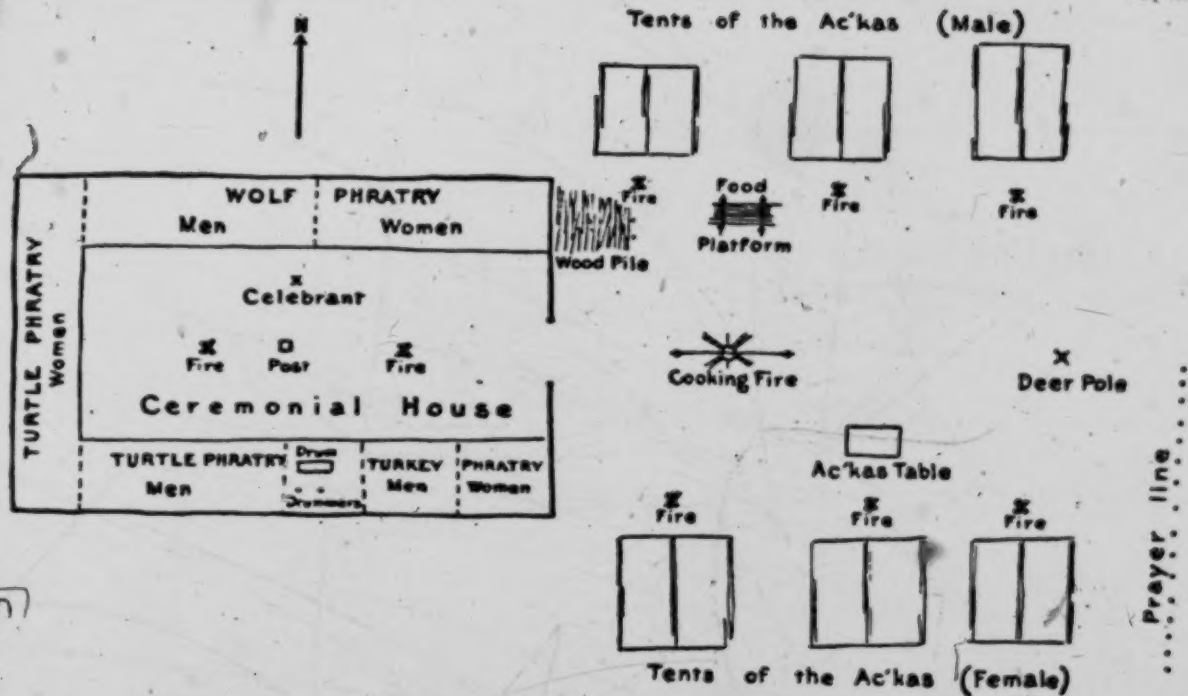
[532]

AND MONOGRAPHS

6:Harrington E-5 (1907-1910) 1921
 NM7 Delaware NM7
 Lenape

84	LENAPE
x 796 [202] • [346] [532] [554]	OFFICERS The messenger sent to assemble the people is one of three male attendants chosen by the leader, and these three men appoint three women to serve also. To these six attendants, known as <i>a'ckas</i>,  FIG. 7—Side posts of Ceremonial House, showing carved faces. falls all the laborious work of the meeting. Although the duties are menial, it is considered quite an honor to be selected as <i>a'ckas</i>. The attendants camp on the north and south sides of the little open
	INDIAN NOTES

UNAMI CEREMONY	85
square just east of the Big House (pl. vii), an area where no one is allowed to pitch a tent. Other officers selected for the meeting are a speaker (usually at the time of the writer's visit, Chief Charley Elkhair), two singers, called <i>Tale'gunuk</i>, "Cranes," whose duty it is to beat the dry deerskin drum and sing the necessary songs, and a chief hunter who is supposed to provide venison for the feast.	X [533]
PREPARATIONS Arrived at the Big House, the attendants begin at once to prepare the building for use after its year of idleness. The first act of the men is to make mortar of mud, in the old style, and stop the cracks between the logs of the house. Then they cut two forked saplings, and set them in the ground about ten feet apart, some distance in front of the Big House (see pl. vii); upon these is laid a pole, running east and west, to support the twenty-gallon kettle used in preparing hominy for the feast. After this they	346 • 796 X 354 796 X 372 796 X
AND MONOGRAPHS	



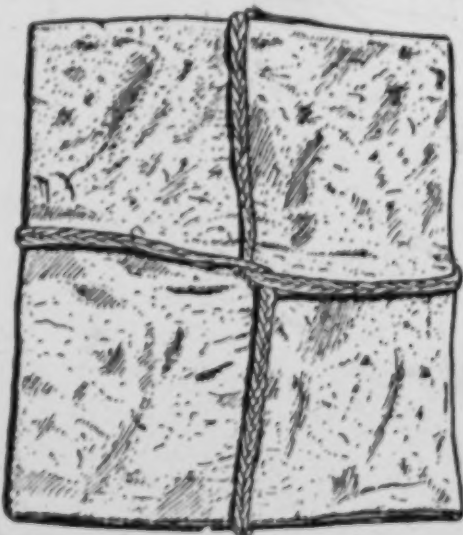
PLAN OF LENAPE CEREMONIAL HOUSE AND GROUNDS NEAR DEWEY, OKLAHOMA

6: Harrington E-5 (1907-1910) 1921
 NM7 Delaware NM7
 Lenape

Facing p. 94

346
 614
 615
 796x

ADAMS' ACCOUNT	119
own first article⁴⁷ the writer has seen of the Annual Ceremony among the Lenape in Oklahoma, is that written by Adams,⁴⁸ which reads as follows: "The peculiar steps which they use in this dance have caused the name 'stomp' or 'stamp' to be applied to it. "In regard to the stomp dances of our people, we have several kinds of dances; the most important one is the 'worship dance' which is carried on in a large building called a temple, which is rectangular and ranges from 60 to 80 feet long, from 30 to 40 feet wide, and is about 10 feet high. It is built of wood with 2 doors. The main entrance is at the eastern door, and it has only a dirt floor. "On each post is carved a human face. On the center post or one in the center of the building four faces are carved; each face is painted one-half red and one-half black. All the people enter at the east and go out the same way. When they come in they pass to the right of the fire, and each of the three clans of the Delawares take seats next to the wall, the Turtle clan on the south, the Turkey on the west, and the Wolf on the north. In no case can any one pass between the center post and east door, but must go around the center post, even to go to the north side of the temple. "This dance is held once each year, in the fall,	796^x 535 796^x 346 ● 796^x [532] 535 796^x
AND MONOGRAPHS	

MINSI CEREMONIES	129
ARRANGEMENT OF THE BIG HOUSE Like the Unami Big House, that of the Minsi had a large central post bearing carved faces; but, unlike that of the Unami, there was a second short post,  FIG. 14.—Drum of dried deerskin, Minsi type. E. T. Tefft collection, American Museum of Natural History. (Length 16.7 in.) near the central one, upon which was hung, for each ceremony, a raw fresh deerskin with the head and horns at the	346● 796x [534]
AND MONOGRAPHS	

130	LENAPE
• 346 796^x [532] [534] [778]	top. This feature, however, corresponds with the second form of the Annual Ceremony noted among the Lenape in Oklahoma and also recorded by Zeisberger in Pennsylvania. Near this central post the singers sat, and beat with four carved sticks upon a dry deerhide folded into a square, in lieu of a drum (fig. 14), differing from the Unami form, which is a rolled dry deerskin upon which are tied several slats of wood (fig. 8). The drumsticks are flat, resembling those of the Unami, as each bears a face carved upon one side, but differ from them in the form of the forked end, and in width. Some, it is said, represented women, the breasts being indicated as FIG. 15.—a, Drumstick, Minsi type; b, Prayerstick. E. T. Tefft collection, American Museum of Natural History. (Length of a, 19 in.)
	INDIAN NOTES

THE BIG HOUSE	131
among the Unami, but this feature does not appear in the set collected by the writer at Grand River reserve (fig. 15,a), which the Indians said were representative of the Minsi type. There were two poles laid along on each side from end to end of the Big House to divide the dancing place in the center from the sitting places on the side, which were covered with a special kind of leaves. Along these poles twelve little sumach sticks (fig. 15, b), peeled and painted, were laid for twelve people to hold in their hands, and tap on the poles in time to the music. There were also provided a turtle rattle, which was placed at the foot of the central pole; a fire-drill which Nellis Timothy thinks was worked on the "pump-drill" principle, like that of the Unami, and a lot of entirely new and unused bowls and spoons of bark. Unlike the Unami custom, both doors of the Big House were used, the people always going in at the east door and coming out at the west, and here also (like the Unami) the ashes	346 ● 791 X [532] [534] [415]
AND MONOGRAPHS	

132	LENAPE
● 346 796¹ [775] 796^x [787] [202] 372 796^x	were carried out. "The Sun and everything else goes toward the west," say the Minsi, in explanation, "even the dead when they die." PRELIMINARIES The first act remembered by the informants preparatory to holding a meeting was to send to each man in the tribe who had been blessed by a "vision of power," a little stick which represented an invitation to the ceremony, the time of which the messenger gave out, before which date the people leaving their scattered homes gathered and camped about the Big House. Meanwhile hunters were sent out, appointed before, not during the meeting as among the Unami, to bring in for the Winter Ceremony, if possible, exactly twelve deer, which were cooked by four young men who served as attendants in a small separate house, built for the purpose. <i>Fire.</i>—The fire was made with a fire-drill by a group of old men for use in the Big House, but, as among the Unami,
	INDIAN NOTES

172	LENAPE
796 ^x 773	TRADITIONAL ORIGIN The Indians say that a cub bear, kept as a pet by a Lenape family long ago, became a great playmate of one of the little sons of the family, but finally grew so large that the child's parents decided to get rid of it; so they tied a little bag of tobacco around its neck and told it to go away. This it did, but the little boy, its playmate, soon fell ill, and his parents searched in vain for a cure. After a long while one of the Indian doctors told his parents that if they would hold a ceremony of this kind and repeat it every two years, the child would recover and would keep his health. This was done; the boy recovered, and his family, who belong to the Wolf phratry, have continued to practise the rites ever since, believing that it preserves their health.
796 ^x ● 346	PREPARATIONS This ceremony required a special house, which was made new for it every two years, so the first thing the family did, when the time approached, was to find
	INDIAN NOTES

BEAR CEREMONY	173
a number of men, each of whom was paid a yard of wampum to cut forks and poles and erect the building. This was made by setting up a frame of poles in the form of a Big House, but smaller, only seven paces wide and fifteen paces long, then covering the top with brush and piling brush at the sides. Then to the east of the house a pole was erected, upon which to hang the meat for the feast, which, in old times, had to be a bear; but when bears became scarce a black hog was substituted, and of late a hog of any color has been used. The building finished, the hog was killed, and, having been hung on the pole over night, was taken into the house the next day, quartered, singed on a fire that had been built inside, then carried out again, cut up, and cooked, all except the loose fat, which was kept for a special purpose, as will appear later. When done, the meat was kept in large baskets, with the exception of the head, which, having been cooked whole, was placed in a large bowl with two of the animal's ribs in its mouth.	796^x 346 ● 252 796^x
AND MONOGRAPHS	

6:Harrington E-5 (1907-1910) 1921
NM7 Delaware NM7
Lenape

HARRINGTON-LENAPE RELIGION AND CEREMONIES

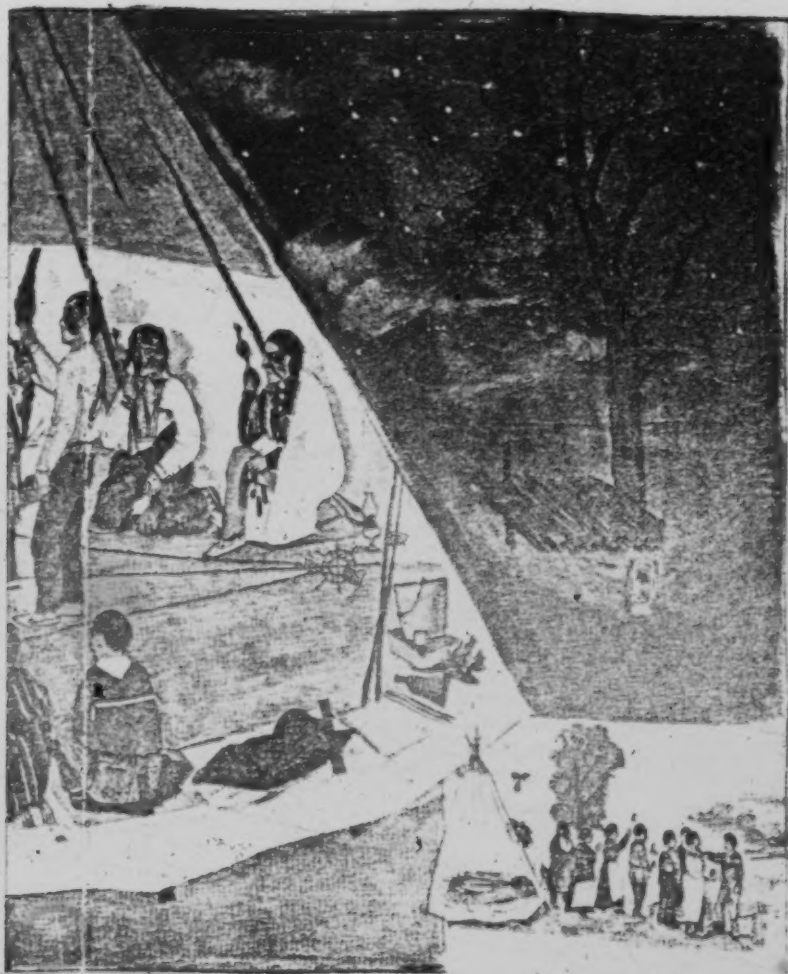


THE PEYOTE RITE AMONG THE I
Native Painting by Earnest Spybuck, a Sha

[following p. 186 (A)] [IN color]

6:Harrington E-5 (1907-1910)1921
NM7 Delaware NM7
Lenape

PL. IX



RITE AMONG THE LENAPE
g by Ernest Spybuck, a Shawnee

[Following p. 186 (B)] [IN color]

^x796 and women, and a man was selected to cook the hog, and another to supply wood and to cut the poles for swinging the kettle, both of whom were paid with a yard of wampum. The fire was kindled with a special flint-and-steel always kept with the outfit.

"It will be observed that the otter-skin has a slit down the middle of the neck, through which the owner thrust his head in such a manner that the otter's nose lay under the wearer's chin, while its body and tail hung down his back. Wearing the skin in this manner himself impersonating the original otter, the owner would open the ceremony by walking about the fire, chanting and shaking the turtle rattle which resembled those used in the Big House, while the audience kept time to his song by uttering 'Hu-hu-hu-hu!' The nature of the song the writer was unable to learn, but, like the chants of the Bear Ceremony, it probably was concerned with the singer's 'dream helper.' When he had finished, another man put on the skin and took up the chant, and so on until noon the next day, when the ceremony was brought to a close and all joined in the feast. At this time the skin is told, 'We will feed you again in two years.'"

In regard to the Grease Drinking, or Otter, Ceremony, we have the following historical notes to add from the testimony of Tom Half Moon. The last time that the ceremony was performed (1898) it was done in behalf of his mother, Lizzie Half Moon of the Turkey group, in whose family the rite was an hereditary one coming down through her father, the previously mentioned Col. Jackson. Jackson acquired the privilege to perform it through his wife whose great-grandfather is said to have been its originator. His mother, [155] it seems, was at the point of death, whereupon it was decided as a last resort to try a cure through the Otter Ceremony. Shortly after its completion, however, the afflicted woman died. Upon the failure of the rite it was decided to abandon it upon the assumption that it was valuable only to the women of an earlier generation of the Nation's history. Half Moon, who was present at its performance, corroborated the details [346] previously recorded, affirming that the celebration was carried on within a brush enclosure or fence and not covered over at the top. He recalled how each one among those present took a little drink of grease, throwing the rest of his or her portion into the fire. The portions were offered to the participants by the leader or master of ceremonies.

CAPTAIN CHIPPS—They believe there are no greater wizards or witches than knaves or drunkards. 754

All the modern informants confirmed the belief in witches and wizards, but J. W., his wife and son were especially vehement in their current existence.

41. *National Worshipping Society (Big House)*

JOHN JOHNSTON—They have a national worship which they think keeps the world from coming to an end. It is attended with very great expense in procuring wampum and provisions, etc. This meeting is continued for 12 days and twelve nights successively. They have a large building prepared for that purpose about 25 feet in width and 50 or 60 feet in length according to the number that is expected will attend, with a door in each end, notice is given at what time their worship will commence. When they are collected and seated in a row round the outside of the building the men by themselves and the women by themselves a man and woman at each door the man for a doorkeeper and the women to sweep between every exercise, the fires are made in the middle of the building which they make by rubbing two dry sticks together that it may be pure, the fire they put out every day and make new lest it should become adulterated, they make it by rubbing two dry sticks together as at the first. Thus prepared the one that made preparation for the meeting gets up with a turtle shell in his hand (containing pebbles) and he gives it a shake and the whole assembly arise with him he then begins telling a dream which he says he dreamt in his childhood and the whole congregation repeats it after him in one voice word by word till he says he heard a voice singing to him and begins to sing immediately upon which two men commence beating with flat sticks upon skins folded together then he stops singing and he with the whole assembly jump ten or twelve jumps in the form of a dance then he makes a sudden halt and goes on with his dream as before repeated by the whole in one voice until he commences singing again as before and the players commence beating and the whole jump or dance in the form above mentioned thus they continue for the space of half an hour or more

DELAWARE INDIAN BIG HOUSE CEREMONY

17

information may alter. We can not be certain whether his integra-796
tion of the rites was an actual condition holding true for the ceremony 114
of the period, or one resulting from his style of writing down what
he remembered of native customs after some years of retirement from
the Indian country. The procedures followed by the Delawares in
the four or five "feasts" he describes for us are all embraced within
the Big House performance as we know it later. And, rather than dis-
credit the force of living evidence based on the rites as performed by
the Nation now, I would prefer to correct the information recorded
by the observant but unsympathetic missionary. For, indeed, the
ceremony shows itself to have a complex capitalization, its ritual ex-
tending through every form of worship, including individual, family
or "clan rites," that we have mention of in any of the Delaware ac-
counts. The Big House capitulates the elements of certain minor feast
ceremonies held on special occasions by families.¹ The great annual
ceremony seems to stand as an entity, one that does not submit to any
assumption of recent origin in its present form of organization. Through
the close resemblance it shows, element by element, with the Munsee
corresponding ceremony, the two tribes were apparently performing
it as a national religious institution before 1700, when they separated
in the east, one division to go westward, the other to Canada. So it
also seemed to Harrington.²

Unfortunately Heekewelder, who knew the Delawares so intimately,
declined in his book to treat the topic of ceremonies, referring the
matter to the previous narratives of Loakiel, whose knowledge we know
was not gained from intimate contact with the tribe.

Reverting to consideration of the fate of the Big House in the suc-
cession of moves which the Delawares made in their two-century tra- [67]
verse from New Jersey to Oklahoma, we can only trace definite memory
of the "temple" and ceremony to the final period of the tribe's resi-
dence in Kansas from about 1867 on. While in Kansas the Big House
was located some five or six miles east of Lawrence.

The informant gave the following facts concerning the reconstruc-796
tion of the building and the rehabilitation of the ceremony after the 346
tribe had settled down to residence in its present seat in northern Okla-
homa.

"In the Cherokee country the Big House of Little Caney River
was reorganized by men of the Yellow Tree or poplar band. Three
men were pa³man-axgu'xwe, ne'ni'pai, and ehalu'xola'nd, whose names
in order mean "Man Moving Around," "The One Who Stands," "Man

¹ Throughout the year there is a series of local feasts, some esoteric family
ceremonies apart from the communal Big House worship. These are being
studied in text and prepared for presentation in a separate memoir.

² I am drawing this inference of basic unity in fundamentals of the Munsee
and Delaware forms of worship upon the conclusion reached by Harrington,
pp. 196-197), after he had studied the Munsee rite.

796 Who is Carried Around." Their descendents still carry the burden
 346 of the worship. They belonged to the "Wolf" group (Tu'k-wai't).

For this reason the Wolf group claims the right to sponsor these exercises now, and holds the majority rule in the present Big House deliberations. And in my judgment they will always rule hereafter. The present house was built three or four hundred yards to the southwest of the present spot but on account of its inconvenience it was moved to where it now stands, and one acre was set aside by the Dawes Commission. It was remodeled by us after a deliberation in September 1913.

796 "The ceremony has not been "taken in" for four years," the last one
 735 being led by Frank Wilson (E'm-a'). Poverty has driven them to neglect it. And also the loss of the wampum beads which one time numbered about one hundred and twenty-eight Indian yards, all of which has nearly disappeared for it has been sold to other Indian tribes, to white people or to Museums as relics."

796 Speculations upon the origin of the ceremony would be quite out of
 171 order from the ethno-historical point of view, but Delaware traditional history has no such hesitant attitude. As the myth develops we observe how the inception of the idea of the ceremony is laid to the revelation made in dreams to chosen leaders among the Munsee. Opinion seems quite general among the Delawares that the original conception of the ceremony is a Munsee one. This is interesting because it locates the ceremony in the northerly group of the three tribes forming the so-called Delaware Nation. It is fortunate that we have, from the pen of Harrington,¹ a treatise on the Munsee form of the Big House ceremony for the purpose of comparison and evaluation as far as the material provided in the several accounts will permit us to go. At present there seems little to point toward proof of priority for the Munsee phase of the worship, except for the quasi-historical estimate of the Delawares themselves. A feeling of respect for the Munsee is general among the Delawares. They are held in high esteem for their former bravery and, strange to say though natural enough in the regard held by Indians for such matters, for their indifference to economic and material affairs and devotion to those of a spiritual nature.²

648 ESOTERISM OF DELAWARE RELIGION.—In the missionary descriptions
 791 of 170 years ago, chiefly from the pen of John Heckewelder, we hear constantly of the inner spirit of aversion held toward the whites, and the distrust felt by the natives concerning the motives of all Euro-

¹ This was written in October 1928.

² Harrington I, pp. 127-161.

³ Illustrative of this sentiment several Delaware observations may be recalled in reference to the Munsee. The latter, it would seem, are held in high esteem for their bravery and ability in spiritual matters, yet were noted for an indifference to dress and economic properties, in which respect the Delawares think they stood out in contrast with them.

771 ceremony are framed in richly symbolical acts, impressive to the civ-
 114 ilized as well as the uncivilized observer, participated in equally by the
 congregation of worshipers, young and old, great and humble. That
 the Delawares produced a religion in the real, almost classical sense,
 will not, I believe, be strenuously denied even by the proponents of
 other creeds, at least those of the more liberal type of mind. It might
 indeed have become a great one of the mediaeval type had it been
 linked with the destinies of a militant aggressive race, with its native
 humanitarian ideals, its precepts of altruism and humility, its lyrics,
 its litanies and mysticism.

But after all, whatever the civilized reader, no doubt himself an
 adherent to some creed accused of being equally as superstitious if
 not as picturesque, may call these religions, there they stand as they
 evolved—lasting symbols of the strange systems of thought that have
 appeared and almost vanished in the changing pageant of human
 history.

772 THE DELAWARE COSMOS, THE BEAUTIFUL WHITE PATH.—It is rather
 346 difficult to grasp the Delaware scheme of things. The cosmos in terms
 778 of the Big House is a dual symbolism; one realm being that of the
 celestial universe embraced in terms of time and space; the other, the
 tangible realm of the human in the midst of the concrete. The two
 are fused in the symbol of the Big House. The term Big House has to
 the Delaware a symbolical value much deeper than its descriptive
 one, for we discover that the Big House stands for the universe; its
 floor, the earth; its four walls, the four quarters; its vault, the sky
 dome, atop which resides the Creator in his indefinable supremacy. To
 use Delaware expressions, the Big House being the universe, the center
 post is the staff of the Great Spirit with its foot upon the earth, its
 pinnacle reaching to the hand of the Supreme Deity. The floor of
 the Big House is the flatness of the earth¹ upon which sit the three
 grouped divisions of mankind, the human social groupings (Pole",
 Pukowa'ngo, Tu'k"sit) in their appropriate places; the eastern door
 is the point of sunrise where day begins and at the same time the
 symbol of the beginning of things; the western door the point of
 sunset and symbol of termination; the north and south walls assume
 the meaning of respective horizons; the roof of the temple is the visible
 sky vault. The ground beneath the Big House is the realm of the
 underworld while above the roof lie the extended planes or levels,
 twelve in number, stretched upward to the abode of the "Great Spirit,
 even the Creator" as Delaware form puts it. Here we might speak of
 the earyed free images, the revered masi'ngok, the representations
 on the center pole being the visible symbols of the Supreme Power,

¹ Lamha'kiye "earth here below," so the inhabited world is referred to.
 The Delawares also know this as keetbakkiye, "great earth" meaning the
 main body of the earth.

DELAWARE INDIAN BIG HOUSE CEREMONY

23

those on the upright posts, three on the north wall and three on the south wall, the mani'tu of these respective zones; those on the eastern and western door posts, those of the east and west. Of the mani'tu or "spirit-forces," both specific and general, more will be said later.

But the most engrossing allegory of all stands forth in the concept of the White Path,¹ the symbol of the transit of life, which is met with in the oval, hard-trodden dancing path outlined on the floor of the Big House, from the east door passing to the right down the north side past the second fire to the west door and doubling back on the south side of the edifice around the eastern fire to its beginning. This is the path of life down which man wends his way to the western door where all ends.² Its correspondent exists I assume in the Milky Way, where the passage of the soul after death continues in the spirit realm.³ As the dancers in the Big House ceremony wend their stately passage following the course of the White Path they "push something along," meaning existence, with their rhythmic tread.⁴ Not only the passage of life, but the journey of the soul after death is symbolically figured in the ceremony as will be explained in note III in the appendix.

The ceremony symbolizes the transit of the year period. Its twelve nights of performance represent the figure of the twelve moons, its progress from east to west the course of the sun, its varied symbolical rites the events in the passage of life's orbit from beginning to end.

We learn that the White Path is "our Father's, the Great Spirit's road," upon it human life proceeds in its course, which grand movement is symbolized by the dancers as they tread the "White Path" of the "Big House." By another allegory we have the clearing away of impediments from its surface in the intervals between the dances by the efforts of the Attendants who use the wing feathers of "pure" birds, such as the eagle, with which the "Path" is brushed clean. Here

¹ We'llapale'igag. "Good or Beautiful White Path." Also we'lau'sit motoma'kan, "Righteous Path."

² The Delaware, like his Christian brother, admits that it is hard for feeble man to walk in this path without erring. The concept has deep possibilities for discussion from the point of view of ethics and life as the pagan sees them.

³ The symbolical association between the "White Path" and the Milky Way is not definitely proved by Delaware information. By some strange circumstances it seems, the Delawares can not furnish the native name of the Milky Way. Persistent inquiry among the older men both at Dewey and at Anardarko, Oklahoma, by V. M. Petrullo have failed to procure it, likewise correspondence with Joe Washington and J. A. Parks, prominent members of the Delaware Nation. Therefore the association is my own theoretical assumption, an interpretation of our data, and upon the analogy offered by other Algonkian beliefs in which the Milky Way is generally the "Spirit or Ghost Path" over which the soul of the deceased passes to the realm above. The only Delaware equivalents for Milky Way so far obtained are per'mikic'k'tek "across marked" or "across smoky way," and a notion that it is compared with a cowliek of hair, paxcanhwig, "where the hair is parted," which may be discarded as far as their bearing upon the question here as concerned. This important point calls for solution.

⁴ The term ka'nteka implies this figure. (See page 12).



Fig. 3—View of the Delaware Indian "Big House," Caney Creek, Okla.

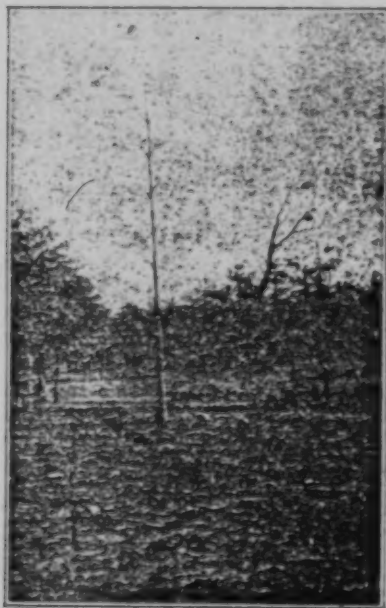


Fig. 4—View of trimmed tree upon which
meat is hung at ceremony.

(Photos by Dr. Truman Michelson, Bur. Am. Ethnology, Wash., D. C.)

DELAWARE INDIAN BIG HOUSE CEREMONY

35



778
532

Fig. 5—View of the center post with carved face above. Looking toward the west door.

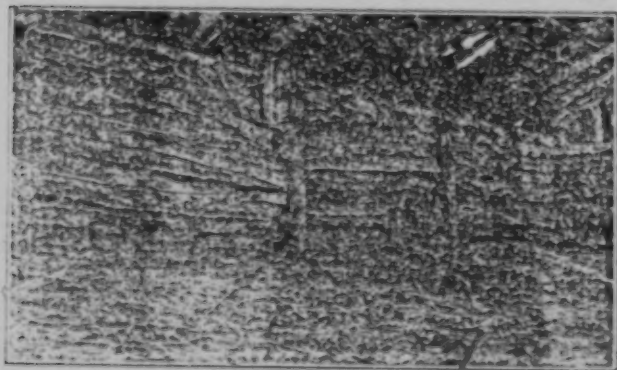


Fig. 6—View inside the Big House, showing support-posts, side logs and three of the false-face images on the side posts. The straw upon which the worshippers sit is also on the ground.

(Photos by Dr. Truman Michelson, Bur. Am. Ethnology, Wash., D. C.)

10: Speck E-4,5 (ca. 1925) 1931

• NM7 Delaware NM7

DELAWARE INDIAN BIG HOUSE CEREMONY

83

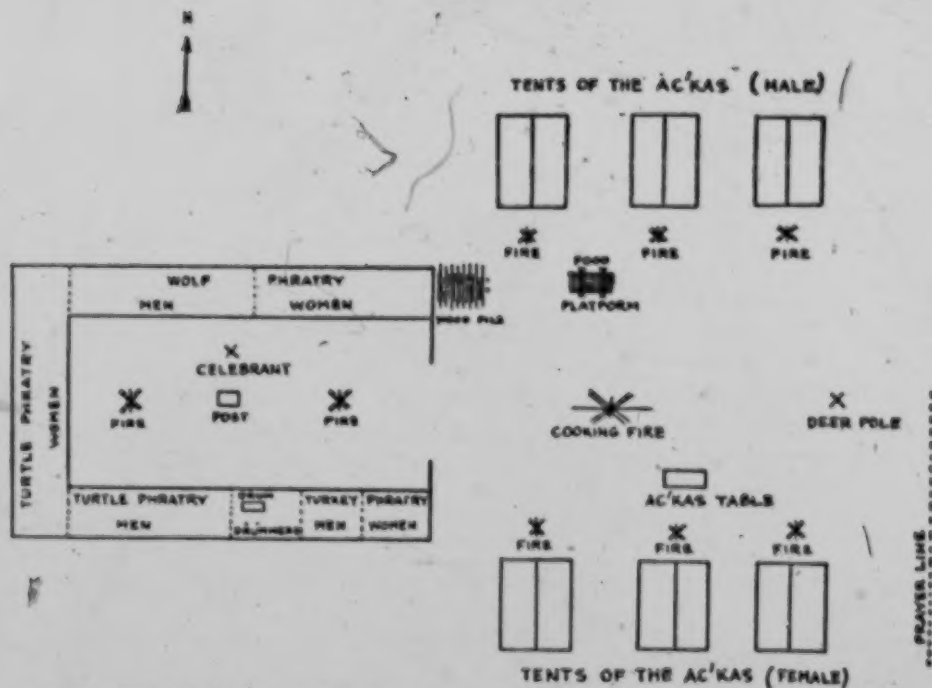


Fig. 11—Plan of Lenape Ceremonial House and Grounds near Dewey, Oklahoma. After Harrington.

346

346
 796

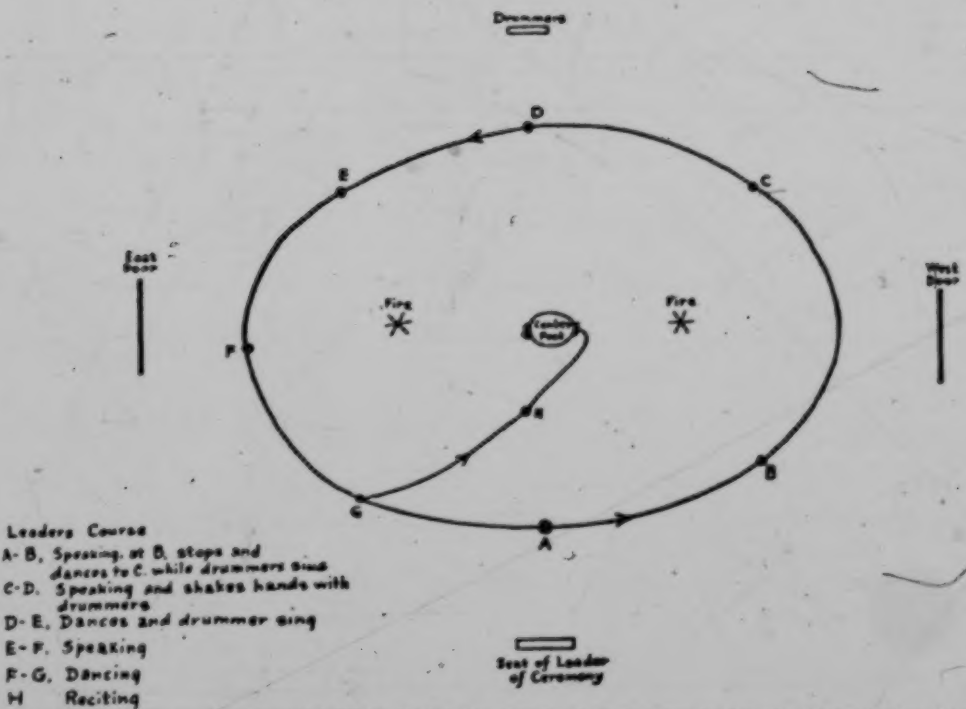


Figure 12—Diagram of "Beautiful White Path," the circuit of performers in the Big House during dances.

DELAWARE INDIAN BIG HOUSE CEREMONY

85

"This, behold, is my dream"

And I can thus explain it and sing it in every way just as I saw it." ^{539*}
 And now, it was said, first of all there must be a house built. And ⁷⁷³
 also to be planned how that house should look both as to its inside ³⁴⁶
 dimensions and height. And also, it was said what would be the size of
 the door here to be at the direction of the setting sun¹ and at the direc-
 tion of the sunrise. And there will be jointed sections of the logs,
 and three posts used at the sides. And two will be on each side of the
 door reaching to the height of the top of the roof. And in the middle
 shall be the big post. And it shall be as high as the height of the house.
 And all posts shall be notched on top. And these at the side where
 the logs join shall stand as stud-posts facing each other, there held
 together at the top using short cross-ties.² And there shall be on top
 a larger timber cross-piece. And the ridge rafters in two pieces in
 the center where they join shall be more than a person's height, there
 from the beginning of the roof-pitch. And shall be made of various
 woods. And also the rafters and flat boards shall be used with the
 bark on, likewise in the roofing.

¹ The Big House, as we learn here, was conceived in a dream-vision revealed to certain persons by the Great Spirit. The recitation of experiences, obtained while in a dream state or in a disturbed emotional condition, has ever continued to form the key note of the ceremony so founded.

² The present Big House on Little Casey River, Oklahoma, is set north and south, evidently so placed by mistake, due to the position of the river.

³ The notched binders fitted into notches of the posts to lock them.

And at both sides where sets the center post, there also shall be built the fires. Right there opposite and above them, an uncovered place shall be left in the roof. And that will be to force out the smoke. And on all the posts at about a person's height there shall be carved the mask-image face,³ and also half the face painted red and the other side blackened.

And around the sides where the people sit, there shall be put dried ^{531*}
 grass. And three men and three women chosen, one shall be of the ⁷⁷³
 "Pole" group, and of the Pukowa'ngo, and of the Tu'k'sit. Their ⁷⁴⁶
 service shall be to labor as long as the Gauwing, it was said, ten and two days⁴ praying. All this time they furnish sufficient well-dried wood. It shall be, for those women, obligatory that they grind up corn and cook meat. And the Attendants all together feed in the house. And they pay them one shoulder-length⁵ of wampum every time they furnish food. And it is the rule that the people shall use wampum when purchasing food from the Attendants. There everyone who receives visions in the House will eat there with his family three times each day.

¹ These are the sculptured personifications of the spirit-forces.

² For the discussion of this archaic style of enumeration in the ceremony see page 62.

³ Measured from the shoulder point to the tip of finger of the extended arm.

DELAWARE INDIAN BIG HOUSE CEREMONY

87

No iron or nail is used when building the House, and no wooden floor. It has a dirt floor inside the House. Deerhide is used when the drum is tied together and two drum-sticks are cut forked. And small faces are carved on one side, alike in appearance. Another different pair of sticks are made plain and these are used when the cranes' are singing. And a wooden bowl is made ready when they mix up the tobacco and kinnickinnick'. Another different wooden bowl is provided when they carry the red paint and puceon' and also there they put cedar. [539^x 773 346 415]

And ten and two sticks are made, called "means of earnest prayer." And some are marked with spots. Whoever wishes to sing in company shall also use this when helping to lift up the prayer, it is said, with concentration of spiritual force far above to the ten and two sky-levels where dwells the Creator. [539^x 773 796]

And now this Big House when first built, they say of it, was the one great prayer-creed, that this carved post in the middle of the House, standing there reaches to the above through as many as ten and two strata. And the strata of sky light are as high as that post, it is said, this being the fastener. That is the Creator's staff. From that very staff, branch off all prayer-creeds of the red-people given to them, whence come all other prayer-creeds of the world. [778]

* Meaning the drummers. There being two drummers, one of them sings in a tone which the other repeats immediately after him, in imitation of the manner in which wild cranes cry when flying in response to the call of their leader. The result in tone is similar to an echo. The crane is the Sand-hill crane (*Grus mexicana*), *daleka'ok*, (plural) whence the drummers derive their sobriquet. *ni'kanasow* "the leader" is the singer who takes the leading part in the song; the other singer is *ontoggi'zawo* "after-time." See page 87. [533]

* See footnote 6, page 127.

* See page 71.

* *mas'mendahl'kan*. This denotes prayer-sticks used in serious address to the Great Spirit. *mas'mendawa'mai* "I beg the Great Spirit to do my bidding." Specimens of the plain and decorated prayer-sticks made by the informant are shown (fig. 24).

The bearers of the twelve prayer-sticks give all their spiritual-force to lift the prayer being given by the speaker or the singers to the highest, or twelfth heaven,—the instrumental symbol of raising the word.

And there was given to the Delawares something which is used when they make fire. It is called "ringing noise-instrument". Whomever they chose as fire-maker, any of the Attendants, was of moral habits or spiritually clean, for that one shall drill for fire in the House. Sometimes flint is used when they make fire in the House and pith is used when they make fire with flint. [372]

Now therefore in the beginning the Delawares came to be blessed with religion together with the Munsee; so the prayer worship proceeds for ten and two days. Now that very log-house itself is called Big House. Right here toward the dawn-direction and sun-set direc-

1 See page 66.

My purposes in this article are to describe a fairly typical peyote meeting of the Delawares which I attended in the summer of 1952, and to discuss the changes which have occurred in this cult since 1930 when Petrullo made his study of Delaware peyotism (Petrullo, 1934).

THE BIG MOON PEYOTE CEREMONY

The Big Moon ceremonies of the Delawares are normally held in canvas covered teepees, generally in the cooler months of the year, but occasionally in hot weather. The reason for their seasonal nature is said to be in the interests of comfort; a teepee with a fire burning in it on a hot Oklahoma night is almost unbearable. Big Moon ceremonies are held on Saturday nights and last until Sunday noon. The peyote meeting I am about to describe was held on the farm of a Delaware, about ten miles east of the small town of Dewey, Washington County, Oklahoma. A teepee, about twenty feet in diameter, had been erected a few steps from the back door of the farm house. A bale of hay had been scattered about near the inside walls of the teepee; tarpaulins and quilts had then been spread over the hay, upon which the participants were to sit. In the center of the teepee was an oval depression, or fireplace, excavated to a depth of about six inches (Fig. 1). Extending from the fireplace were twelve lines or rays, made by scoring the hard ground to a depth of about half an inch. Within the fireplace, also scored in the earth, was a cross and at the intersection of its arms a heart-shaped figure. The fire, which was built over this heart, was made of twelve sticks interlaced in a V-shaped pattern with the open end towards the teepee entrance.

Just east of the fire, and lying along the long axis of the cross, was a stick of soft wood. One end was kept smoldering during the ceremony and was used to light corn husk-Bull Durham cigarettes. At the east end of the fireplace was a raised circular mound of hard packed earth. On the center of this mound, symbolic of the Sun, another heart had been scratched. On the opposite, or west side of the fireplace was the altar. This was an oblong, slightly raised, earthen area, on which was placed the ritual paraphernalia. In its center on a beaded cloth was a large, green peyote, or "Father Peyote." Just behind it a feathered and beaded peyote staff had been thrust into the ground. On the altar to the south of these objects was a glass bowl of green peyote, a kettle of peyote tea, and a leather bag of dried peyote buttons. To the north of "Father Peyote" on the altar was the drum used to accompany the singers (an old fashioned cast iron kettle, partly water-filled, and covered with a tightly drawn, wet, buckskin cover), and a bunch of

sage

276
795
796 sage. The fireplace and the altar had been made many years previously, showing much use by being smooth and hard packed.

796 While the man who was to tend the fire and guard the door (fire-chief) and several helpers were arranging the tepee, several women were preparing peyote in the farmhouse kitchen. Peyote tea was made by chopping up dried peyote buttons and dropping them in boiling water. After steeping for a few minutes the tea was strained. Green peyote was prepared by peeling off the leathery skin, only the tops being left intact. A little before ten o'clock the fire-chief lit the fire in the tepee with flint and steel. As soon as he came out of the tepee the leader (or road-chief) entered, followed by the drum-chief, the fourteen other participants, and finally the fire-chief. This meeting was somewhat atypical in the small number of participants; attendance usually averaged about twenty-five. After everyone was seated the drum-chief, a Sioux from the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, announced that several people had prayers and announcements to make. The road-chief, a Winnebago, then prayed in his own language. As translated next day, this prayer welcomed the participants and asked for divine assistance in the conduct of the meeting. This meeting had been initiated by a Delaware woman who was ill (No. 14 in Fig. 1), and she stood up and thanked everyone for coming and assisting her in regaining her health. Another Delaware (No. 3 in Fig. 1) then said a few words, principally to the effect that the "Native American Church" was not "idolatry" and that he was glad to welcome a white couple (the writer and his wife) to a meeting "to see what it really was like."

The road-chief then prayed again in Winnebago. When this prayer was concluded, he passed the peyote staff and a bunch of sage to the man on his left, who passed it on in a clockwise direction until it had

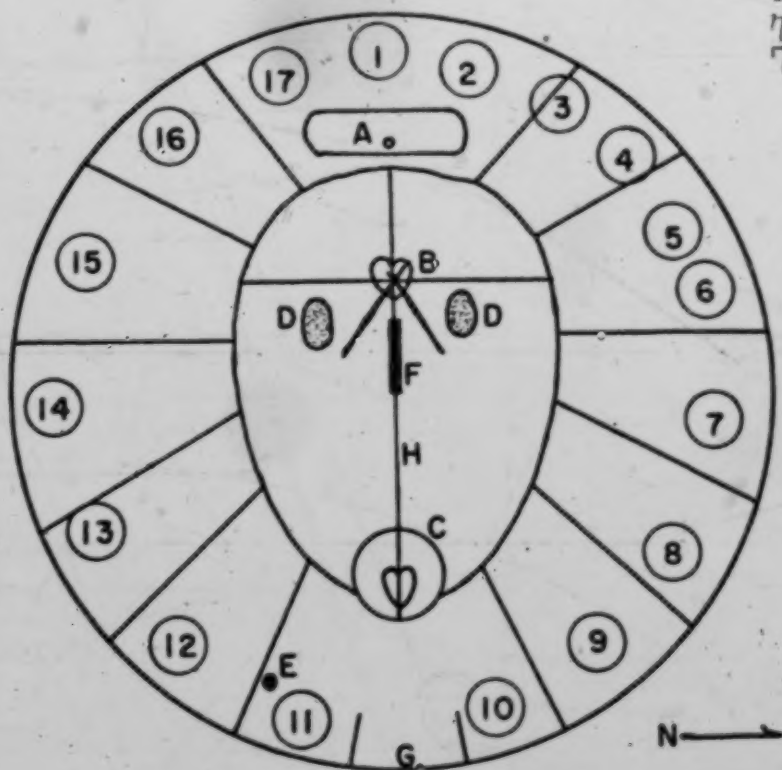
[text continues on p. 206]

(Explanation of Figure 1)

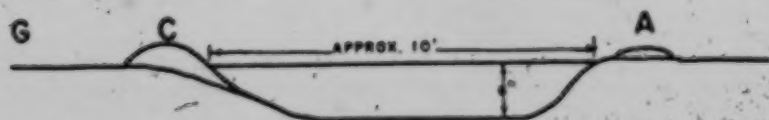
- | | | |
|--------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| 276
346
795
796 | A. Altar | 4. Shawnee man |
| | B. Fire. To some peyotists the heart represents the soul of the Fire Spirits. | 5. Shawnee woman (4's wife) |
| | C. Sun Mound. The heart symbolizes the soul of the Sun. | 6. Delaware man |
| | D. Ash Pile. Patrolle noted that in some versions of the rite these symbolize the lungs of Christ. I could not confirm this. | 7. Ego |
| | E. Water bucket and dipper. | 8. Ego's wife |
| | F. Smoldering stick used to light cigarettes. | 9. Sioux man |
| | G. Tepee entrance. | 10. Sioux woman (9's wife) |
| | H. Cross. Long axis symbolizes peyote road. | 11. Fire-chief, Delaware |
| | 1. Road-chief, Winnebago | 12. Delaware man |
| | 2. Delaware man | 13. Delaware man |
| | 3. Delaware man | 14. Delaware sponsor |
| | | 15. Winnebago woman (16's wife) |
| | | 16. Winnebago man |
| | | 17. Drum-chief, Sioux |

Figure 1

276
346
795
716



TOP VIEW



ELEVATION

[p 53 (c)]

157 herd and gave him a chase. He followed
 224 until the buffalo was about tired out, with
 521 his tongue hanging out, and hardly able to
 move, while his own horse was in the same
 condition. Leaving his horse and his gun,
 the hunter, fresh and strong, took the buf-
 falo by the tail and drove him on. He then
 went up an ascent and down on the other
 side until they came into a wet place where
 the buffalo stuck in the mud from weakness
 and exhaustion. He had thus taken his buf-
 falo, in one sense. He was powerless, and
 still, except as he made slight efforts to
 fight. After spending some little time in
 this situation during which the buffalo was
 gaining strength and he was losing his, he
 was so fortunate as to espy and signal one
 of his party, who came to his aid, and the
 two, with a rope tied to his horns so as to
 keep at a safe distance from each of them
 and between both, they led or drove him to
 camp and thus the Indian maintained or
 made good his boast.

*Delaware Baptist Mission School*⁸⁸

872 This school, under the supervision of Rev.
 797 John G. Pratt,⁸⁷ a matron, Mrs. Muse, and
 a teacher, Miss Morse,⁸⁸ is in a very flour-
 ishing condition and superior to any I have
 seen in the territory. It has accommoda-
 tions for 78 Indian scholars as boarders and
 lodgers. The number last term was 64, the
 number the present term is about 50, as
 they have held back for the payment, and
 will soon come in now.

346 The buildings consist of a two and a half
 story farm house large on the ground, de-
 signed for the sleeping and clothing rooms
 of the school; another of the same size with
 a wing for a kitchen, designed for the resi-
 dence of the superintendent and teachers,
 and is the eating and cooking place for all.⁸⁹

Also a large school house with folding doors
 [For footnote, see category 116,
 p. 209 (c) -- 444157]

[54(A)]

Shawnee NN17

D
346

in the center so as to separate the boys and girls, although they are as yet all together. There are numerous outbuildings, as a farm is carried on in connection with the school of about two hundred acres. The buildings were erected a few years ago with school money belonging to the Delawares, and is supported with funds in the hands of the government reserved for that purpose.

D
872
[657]D
[797]
[657]

The children are clothed, boarded and taught by the Mission, and the government allows \$75 per annum per scholar. They have two terms of five months each, and the children are kept in school about seven hours per day. They study reading, writing, and spelling, geography, arithmetic, with blackboard exercises. The scholars are mostly young, those now at school ranging from 6 to 18 years. They look well and healthy and free from sore eyes, and are decently and comfortably clad. This is the true system of Indian education, beyond a doubt, and this school is by far in the best condition of any I have seen. We see here New England cleanliness, system and good management. I did not visit the Mission School of the Methodist Southern Board among the Shawnees. It is a large and flourishing school, I believe, but complaints are made of the principal of unfairness, of avarice, etc. He has made himself rich and also the Mission, they having secured by treaty between about 2000 acres of land, and at the same time he was active to prevent Friend Harvey from selling his Mission farm of 200 acres, evidently desiring to break up the Friends Mission.

S
872
797D
797

Mr. Pratt commenced his missionary life 22 years ago with his present wife then 20 years of age. He was accepted as a missionary to Burma, but was requested to fill temporarily an Indian Mission then vacant among the Stockbridges near Fort Leaven-

[p 57(A)]

796 Spirit. It lasts 6 days. It may be repeated by another person or family for a second 6 days, and so on until the feelings are satisfied. It has been known to last a month. The meeting is called by one of a certain class, who I presume correspond with the Keepers of the Faith of the Iroquois. They are called A-la-pa-cte, meaning *Dreamers*. The

• [346] people meet in a large house erected on purpose for this worship and used for nothing else. They build two council fires in the

[614] house, and the people assemble by tribes, the Turtles by themselves, the Wolves by themselves and the Turks by themselves. They use belts of wampum and have many ceremonies. It would seem that this council or religious meeting was called by some one

[346] person. The door of the house of worship must open to the east.

796 When they are assembled two singers [?] sit down to two dried and rolled up deer skins, with sticks in their hands to beat

533 time. The leader, who is stationed on the right hand side of the door, gets up and

[534] shaking a turtle shell rattle, comes in extemporizing verses which are adapted to the set tune of his choosing, to relate his dream. As he relates his dream in music, he dances, they sing the same time and beat time, and all who enter the dance, dance

[535] the religious dance which altogether is called the Gum-mween. This is repeated day by day for six days. But the leaders change. When one has told his dream, he hands his rattle to the next one, who in like singing relates his dream in words of his own making, but sung in an old well known tune of his own choosing.

796 Before the festival 12 hunters are sent

[262] out for deer's meat, as no other meat is allowed. About 9 each morning this meat is served to all. At sundown each day they have an exhortation from the oldest wise